

March 9, 2022

The Honorable Will Haskell and Roland Lemar
Chairman, Joint Committee on Transportation
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Bldg. #2300
Hartford, CT 06106

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The Auto Care Association is a national trade association comprised of more than 3000-member companies and affiliates that manufacture, distribute and sell motor vehicle parts, accessories, services, tools, equipment, materials, and supplies. In short, we represent the entire supply chain of the independent auto repair industry. The independent aftermarket provides Connecticut car owners with a competitive option for maintaining and repairing their motor vehicle. The value of our industry is demonstrated by the fact that post new car warranty, independent shops provide 70% of repairs based on trust, affordability, and convenience.

On behalf of our members, we are writing to express our concern and opposition to HB 5366 Motor Vehicle Statutes. This bill would mandate that a motor vehicle repair shop shall follow the collision repair procedures, guidelines, recommendations, or service bulletins issued by the original equipment manufacturer when repairing a motor vehicle.

Our concern is this bill would allow vehicle manufacturers to make changes in the OEM repair procedures to require or promote the use of their own OEM parts for all repairs. This would change the competitive balance in the repair industry. Not only would this legislation create higher priced repair costs for consumers but would threaten an industry that generates \$381 B in annual sales and employs 4.6 million people across the country while contributing 2% to GDP. The aftermarket industry also contributes highly to Connecticut jobs market as well as business and commerce. Employing 26,000 jobs, representing \$4.6B in economic activity and \$2B in wages from business outlets such as manufacturers, wholesale, retail, and service will be affected in the state. Aftermarket retailers and automotive recyclers provide residents with affordable options for maintaining and repairing their vehicles.

Additionally, there is no body of research, individual study, or any data to support the implication that aftermarket parts are inferior to OE parts. In fact, they are often produced by the same company that produced the original equipment (OE) part but may come in a different box. The only difference is the OE part often costs more than the non-OE branded equivalent, meaning increased repair and insurance costs for consumers. Further, aftermarket companies can observe the OE part in use, our members often are able to correct problems with the component that were discovered after the vehicle was on the road. Such actions translate into the ability of aftermarket parts to provide motorists with improved vehicle reliability and safety.

We respectfully urge you to amend the bill by **striking section 504-507** as the unintended consequences for consumers and the negative impact to Connecticut business would do more harm than good.

Sincerely,

Tom Tucker
Senior Director, State Affairs